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SOVIET ARCTIC MILITARY BASES

The Soviets realized the strategic importance of the Arctic regions in 1935, and sent teams of scientists there to establish meteorological and radio stations. Now they have created the Tiksi base to counter the US base at Thule, Greenland.

The two main bases in northern Siberia are Vorkutsk and Tiksi, built by thousands of slave laborers and convicts plus large numbers of German and Japanese prisoners of war. Both cities have populations in excess of 100,000, and are located, respectively, at the mouths of the Pechora and Lena rivers. There are also secondary air and naval bases at the mouths of the Yenisey, Ob, Indigirka, and Amur rivers.

In addition to double-tracking the Trans-Siberian railway, the Soviets have constructed new rail networks linking these cities and bases with the railhead at Kotlas. The Soviets are also developing river traffic, and for the past 2½ years have been supplying the Arctic bases by plane.

The defense of the Arctic regions has been assigned to the Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route, which is taking defense measures from the White Sea to the Bering Sea. The Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route has established more than 300 meteorological stations in the area which, each year, is the scene of military maneuvers usually lasting 4-6 weeks and involving 16 divisions.

Tiksi is located 800 kilometers from Nome, Alaska, and forms the pivot point of the Soviets' Arctic defense organization. The Soviets maintain a force of about 45 divisions in Siberia (the Arctic regions). Military areas No 22 and 23 have 22 divisions composed of the former First and Second Far East Army Groups. They are under the command of Marshal Malinovsky.

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